ERASMUS-EDU-2023-CBHE
Project number: 101128376
# MOBILITY RECOGNITION
# FOR INTEGRATION

# MORIN

# WP2. Mobility recognition via learning outcomes

## D2.4 - A 'state-of-the-art' review report on mobility recognition

| Version | Type | Date | Authors | Reviewer | Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.0 | First draft | June 15, 2024 | Aida Alla Erëza Mehmeti Ersan Hamdiu Shkëlqim Miftari | | Initial version |
| 2.0 | Final version | June 21, 2024 | Aida Alla Erëza Mehmeti Ersan Hamdiu Shkëlqim Miftari | | Technical changes based on the feedback received from partners |
| 2.1 | Final version | June 27, 2024 | | Armela Panajoti | Formatting issues addressed (addition of logos, abbreviations; size and font adaptations; ToC headings added, list of tables and figures amended) |

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**Project title:**          Mobility recognition for integration

**Acronym:**               MORIN

**Coordinator:**           University of Vlora "Ismail Qemali", Albania
**Project number:**        101128376

**Topic:**                 ERASMUS-EDU-2023-CBHE

**Type of action:**        ERASMUS          LS
**Project Starting date:** 01 December 2023
**Project duration:**      24 months
**Work packages:**         WP1. Management, coordination and evaluation of MORIN
                           WP2. Mobility recognition via learning outcomes
                           WP3. Mobility recognition in practice
                           WP4. Impact and dissemination of MORIN


**DELIVERABLE DESCRIPTION**

**Work package:**          WP2. Mobility recognition via learning outcomes

**Deliverable:**           D2.4 A 'state-of-the-art' review report on mobility recognition

**Lead beneficiary:**      AAB College, Kosovo

**Dissemination level:**   Public

**Type**:                   Report

**Due date:**              30.06.2024

## Table of contents

## List of figures

## List of tables

## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **Bachelor of Arts** | BA |
| **Bachelor of Science** | BSc |
| **European Highe Education Area** | EHEA |
| **Higher Education Institutions** | HEIs |
| **Master of Arts** | MA |
| **Master of Science** | MSc |
| **Western Balkans 6** | WB6 |

**Executive summary**

Deliverable 2.4. "State-of-the-Art Review Report on Mobility Recognition" involves the creation of a comprehensive report which allows the WB HEIs partners of the consortium to reflect upon the self-assessment of their mobility recognition practices on a larger and more comprehensive scale, and identify gaps in their internal practices. The process of collecting and analyzing data was facilitated through the development and application of a self-assessment tool (deliverable 2.3), crafted based on extensive gray literature research (deliverable 2.2) and a targeted questionnaire used during the proposal writing stage for needs analysis.

## 1. Introduction

The "State-of-the-Art Review Report on Mobility Recognition" is designed to serve a crucial role in enhancing the understanding and effectiveness of mobility recognition practices specifically within the higher education institutions (HEIs) of the Western Balkans (WB6) partners of the consortium. The primary purpose of this report is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current mobility recognition practices, policies, and challenges faced by these institutions, with the aim of informing and guiding future improvements and regional collaboration.

### *1.1 Purpose of the report*

Focusing on the WB partners, the report aims to provide an in-depth examination of the existing frameworks and practices for recognizing student mobility. This includes identifying best practices that are successfully implemented within the region, as well as uncovering gaps and inconsistencies that could hinder the recognition process. By doing so, the report aims to establish a baseline understanding of the mobility recognition landscape among the WB partners.

One of the key objectives is to highlight the importance of mobility recognition as a critical factor in fostering regional integration and alignment with European Higher Education Area (EHEA) standards. By reviewing current practices, the report aims to emphasize the need for consistent, transparent, and effective recognition processes that would ensure the learning outcomes acquired abroad are properly acknowledged and valued within the WB6 HEIs partners in the MORIN Consortium. This alignment is vital for promoting a culture of mobility, enhancing skills portability, and supporting the mutual recognition of qualifications across the region.

The report also aims to provide practical insights and recommendations tailored to the specific context of the WB6 HEI partners. By analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of existing recognition frameworks and practices, the report intends to offer targeted strategies for addressing identified gaps and improving recognition practices. This includes suggestions for adopting best practices and streamlining administrative procedures.

In summary, the "State-of-the-Art Review Report on Mobility Recognition" aims to provide a detailed and comprehensive overview of the current state of mobility recognition among the WB partners of the consortium, focusing on identifying best practices, highlighting challenges, and offering tailored recommendations for improvement.

## 2. Background and context

Prior to presenting and discussing the findings from the self-assessment tool, it is important to recall the findings from the grey literature review conducted.  The grey literature emphasized the transformative impact of globalization on the post-modern world, with EU integration being a strategic priority and a significant challenge for Western Balkan (WB) countries. Supporting the education and potential of young people in the Balkans is crucial for regional development, peaceful coexistence, and reconciliation.

The concept of learning mobility, as defined by the European Parliament, encompasses physical movement to a country other than one's residence for study, training, or non-formal/informal learning. It covers various sectors of lifelong learning, including school, higher education, vocational education and training, adult learning, youth work, and early childhood education and care. On the other hand, various contextual factors influence mobility, such as the European Year of Skills (2023-2024) promoting skills policies to match labor market needs, and the Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport (2021), which includes an objective for improving learning mobility. As a result, the EU has shown commitment to increasing mobility and people-to-people contacts, exemplified by granting visa-free travel to the Schengen area for citizens of several Western Balkan countries. Ongoing dialogues aim to extend these benefits further.

The grey literature review used document analysis as a research method, focusing on written data about people and phenomena created during the life process. It included research reports, working papers, conference proceedings, theses, social media posts, policy documents, and reports from government departments, academics, businesses, and industries. Findings show that:

a)    The Western Balkans (WB6) faces significant challenges in mobility and migration, impacting its relationship with the EU. Addressing these challenges is crucial for regional development and integration

b)    Research and innovation (R&I) and knowledge transfer in the WB6 can accelerate sustainable growth and convergence with the EU, but support and investment in mobility-driven R&I are still needed.

c)    Learning outcomes acquired during study periods abroad must be recognized back in students' home countries and elsewhere to ensure the success of learning mobility and academic exchange.

d)    The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is not always used

consistently, hindering the automatic recognition of credits, including within Erasmus+ credit mobility.

e)    Inconsistent treatment of curricula within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) plays a pivotal role in enhancing or impeding educational mobility and recognition.

f)    Students' mobility needs to be carefully observed for two specific cases: (i) VET Education, and (ii) virtual mobility, which lays the foundation for future student mobility development.

g)    Fostering regional partnerships and exchanges within the Western Balkans and with EU member states is crucial for enhancing a learning mobility culture, skills portability, and mutual recognition of qualifications.

h)    Lessons learned point out that most of the focus is paid to the Erasmus+ Program, being the most prominent and pioneer program in the region.

i)    It is necessary to foster and enhance the learning mobility culture creation process within HEIs and to get students and staff to embrace it, being thus a "top-down approach" and user-friendly.

j)    Mobility and exchanges should be commonplace, not rare, with precise indicators demonstrating their benefits and recognition. Proper upskilling and training of involved staff in transnational mobility fields are essential, along with clear internal management and administration procedures.

k)    Establishing methods or toolkits to make recognition a commonplace regulated process, rather than a personal subjective assessment, starting with a common denominator such as learning outcomes, is needed as evidenced from successful implemented mobility projects both in HE and VET.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Instrument

Based on the information collected from the grey literature sources review, the partners created a questionnaire titled "Mobility recognition: A self-assessment tool". The tool served as a means to thoroughly assess internal recognition practices at Western Balkans (WB) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), partners in the consortium.

In total, there were 14 questions in a Google Form questionnaire (https://forms.gle/RPLxQQJDr5dWrPw87). The first part of the tool collected basic information about the institution, like the types of institutions and programs available in the Western Balkans. This ensured that the tool is relevant to all types of educational institutions in the area, including universities, faculties, colleges, institutes, and academies. Moreover, it comprehensively covered study levels and program types, fostering a nuanced understanding of the educational ecosystem.

In parallel, the second section aimed to gather data about the recognition procedures,

documents, and stakeholder involvement within student mobility. Through a statement-based assessment approach, institutions were asked to engage in a thorough reflection on existing protocols and practices. This segment scrutinized key dimensions such as institutional support mechanisms, establishment and functionality of recognition committees, involvement with national recognition authorities, and the recognition of formal and non-formal learning experiences.

### 3.2 Sample

The self-assessment instrument was distributed to 7 Western Balkan institutions, part of the consortium. It was sent specifically to:
- Professional College, Albania
- European University of Tirana, Albania
- University of Vlora "Ismail Qemali", Albania
- QENDRA ESN, Albania
- AAB College, Kosovo
- Biznesi College, Kosovo
- University St Kliment Ohridski Bitola, North Macedonia

It was requested that each institution assign only one staff member to complete the survey. The questionnaire's introductory part presented information on the questionnaire's goals, the confidentiality of responses, and contact details of the creators for any respondents' inquiry, in an effort to promote openness and trust.

### 3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The approach to data collection outlined here was intended to provide insights and information needed to create a cutting-edge report. The steps are broken down as follows:

### 3.4 Distribution of self-assessment tool

As the leader of this deliverable, AAB College first sent a link of the self-assessment instrument to the chosen sample. Participants received clear instructions and were informed about completion deadlines through email (see Fig. 1). The self-assessment tool was distributed in English, with the Albanian version attached for reference in case of a lack of English proficiency. This decision aimed to ensure that all stakeholders, regardless of their English proficiency, could effectively engage with the tool and contribute to the assessment process.

Dear all,

I hope you are all doing well.

Congratulations on great efforts so far, including the last one - the completion of the self-assessment tool. As we all know, the tool is the basis for the **D 2.4 - "State-of-Art" review report** which AAB, as the task leader, is committed to produce by the end of June. To do so, we need your contribution. **Please fill in self-assessment tool,** the link of which is provided bellow:

https://forms.gle/yw4XtYuPc64vhK148

Each of the seven Western Balkans' partners is expected to fill in a single questionnaire, one per institution. Given the short period we have ahead, I would appreciate it if you can finish the task **by next Tuesday, June 4th.**

I am also attaching the Albanian version of the instrument, for our own reference.

Looking forward to your contribution,

On the behalf of AAB,

**Figure 1. Email to partners for the completion of the self-assessment tool.**

## 3.5 Formation of the Working Group

The coordinator of the project from AAB College established a working group to supervise the data collection and analysis procedure. The group consisted of the following members:

| INSTITUTION | ACADEMIC | CONTACT |
| --- | --- | --- |
| AAB College | Aida Alla | aida.alla@universitetiaab.com |
| AAB College | Erëza Mehmeti | ereza.mehmeti@universitetiaab.com |
| AAB College | Ersan Hamdiu | ersan.hamdiu@universitetiaab.com |
| AAB College | Shkëlqim Miftari | shkelqim.miftari@universitetiaab.com |

**Table 1. AAB College working group.**

This group met, on June 5th 2024, to divide work tasks, talk about procedures, decide on due dates, and assign roles in the report's compilation. For convenience, the meeting was held online (see Fig. 2 and 3), and important points were recorded for future reference.
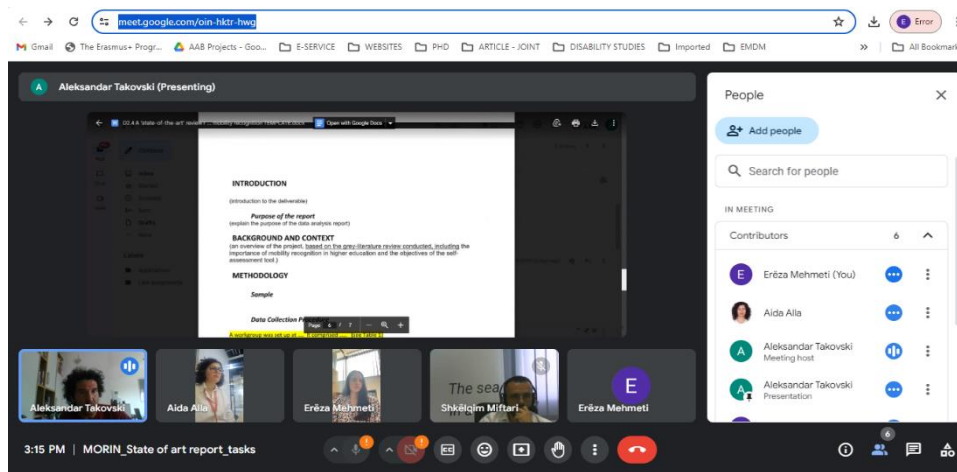
**Figure 2. Invitation to the meeting of the working group.**



**Figure 3. The first online meeting of the working group.**

### 3.6 Initial draft production

Making use of the working group's combined experience, a preliminary draft of the state-of-the-art report was carefully written. This draft emphasized correctness and comprehensiveness while utilizing data gathered from the self-assessment instrument. A follow-up virtual meeting was called on June 15th to evaluate and discuss the first draft. The purpose of this meeting was to provide an opportunity for all members to provide thoughtful comments and suggestions that will improve the report's quality and depth (see Fig. 4).
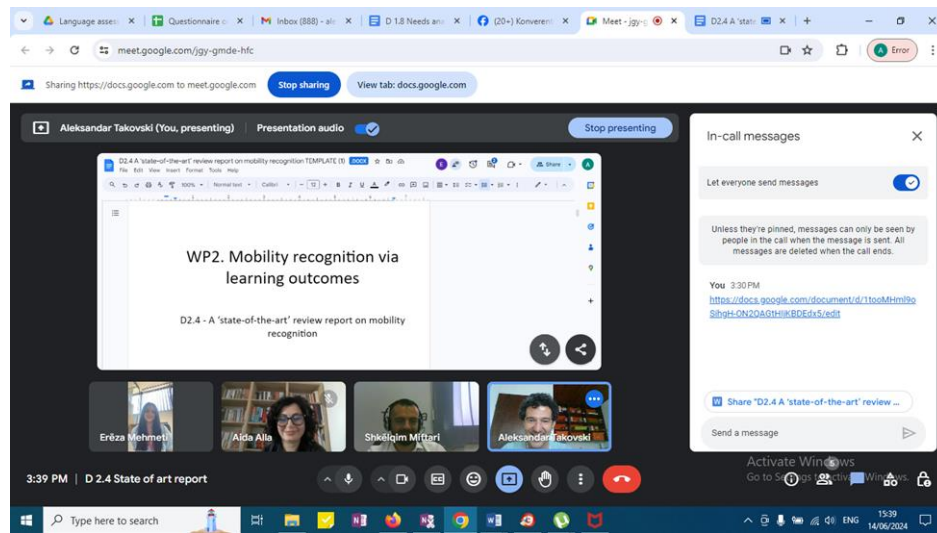
**Figure 4. The second follow-up virtual meeting of the working group.**

### *3.7 Feedback from partners and finalization of the report*

After the first draft was completed, the report—which was characterized by a dedication to collaboration of the working group assigned for this report —was sent out via email (see Picture 5) to consortium partners. An email was sent to partners on 16.06.2024 and they were invited to offer constructive feedback and comments until 22.06.2024. The report has undergone final edits and technical adjustments based on input from consortium participants, which guarantees that the final report accurately represents the knowledge and experience of all consortium members. The final version of the state-of-the-art report was completed and distributed to all consortium partners after all amendments were taken into account. This represented the end of an extensive and cooperative data collection and analysis process.

WP2_D2.4_State of the Art mobility recognition report  External  ▶  Inbox ×     ✕  🖨  ⬀

A   Aleksandar Takovski                                    Sun, Jun 16, 9:13 PM (5 days ago)  ☆  ↰  ⋮
    to Armela, Jola, Diana, Aleksandar, me, Ilirjana, Jasmina, Atdhe, vesna.lopicic, Irina, Ivanka, Kliment, Flajsarova, Sieberova, Dardane ▾

Dear colleagues,

Thank you very much for your contribution to the process of data collection regarding the recognition practices at your institutions based on which AAB team has drafted the State of the Art Report offered back to you for precious feedback.

To be able to provide it, I have shared access to all of you to the working draft of the report, and I am cordially inviting you to take a look at it and make any comments and suggestions towards its improvement and finalization.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1meZMo-uRNYT59_1SJctW7VgCgHZyNyny/edit#heading=h.147n2zr

I would appreciate it if you can offer your contribution no later than June 22nd, after which the AAB team will rework the draft and produce the final report by June 30th as planned.

Finally, I wish good humour, great health and plenty of joy to all of you celebrating Kurban Bajram today, may the love of God always be with you my dear colleagues.

Warmest wishes,

**Figure 5. The email sent to partners to ask for feedback on the report.**

## 4. Findings

Based on the responses gathered using the self-assessment tool, the following insights were observed.
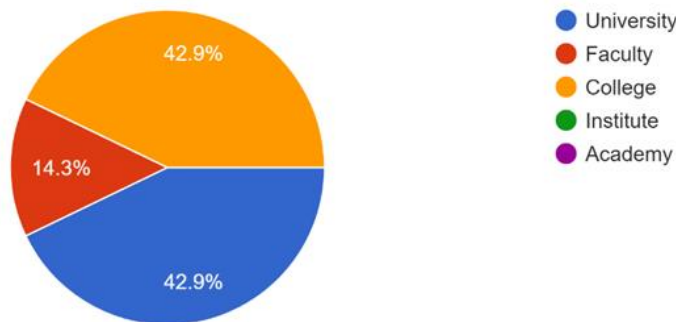


**Figure 6. Type of institution.**

First, Fig. 6 illustrates the typology of higher education institutions involved in the assessment. Each category is represented by a specific color, showing the distribution of institutions. It categorizes these institutions into:

- universities (42.9%, n = 3),
- colleges (42.9%, n = 3),
- faculties (20%, n = 1),
- institutes (0%, n = 0) and,
- academies (0%, n = 0)

Please choose the level of studies/types of programmes offered at your institution. Choose all that apply.

7 responses
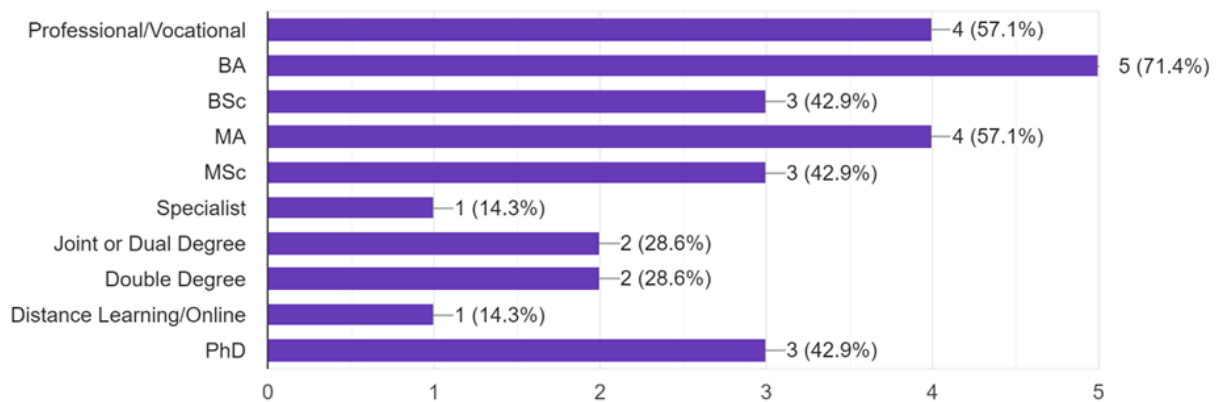


**Figure 7. The levels of studies and types of programs offered at an institution.**

The chart (in Fig.7) illustrates the levels of studies and types of programs offered at an institution, based on responses from 7 participants. The respondents selected all applicable options, and the distribution is as follows:

- Professional/Vocational Programs: 4 respondents (57.1%) indicated that their institution offers professional or vocational programs.
- Bachelor of Arts (BA): 5 respondents (71.4%) reported that their institution offers BA programs, making it the most commonly offered type of program.
- Bachelor of Science (BSc): 3 respondents (42.9%) stated that BSc programs are available.
- Master of Arts (MA): 4 respondents (57.1%) mentioned that MA programs are offered at their institution.

- Master of Science (MSc): 3 respondents (42.9%) indicated the availability of MSc programs.
- Specialist Programs: 1 respondent (14.3%) noted that specialist programs are available.
- Joint or Dual Degree Programs: 2 respondents (28.6%) reported that joint or dual degree programs are offered.
- Double Degree Programs: 2 respondents (28.6%) stated that double degree programs are available.
- Distance Learning/Online Programs: 1 respondent (14.3%) mentioned the availability of distance learning or online programs.
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD): 3 respondents (42.9%) indicated that PhD programs are offered at their institution.

Your institution offers institutional support and guidance through the mobility and subsequent recognition process.
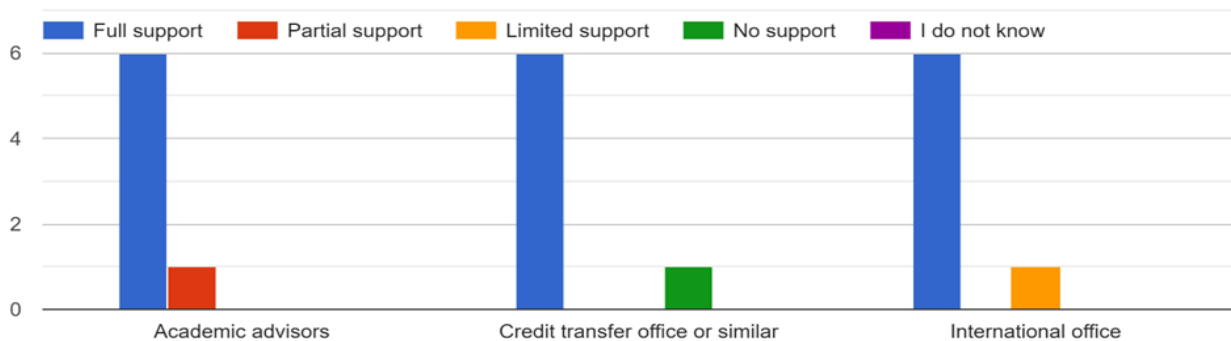


**Figure 8. The level of institutional support and guidance offered through the mobility and subsequent recognition process.**

The survey results (represented in Fig. 8) indicate the level of institutional support and guidance offered through the mobility and subsequent recognition process. The findings are as follows:
- Academic Advisors: 6 respondents reported full support, 1 respondent reported partial support.
- Credit Transfer Office or Similar: 6 respondents reported full support, 1 respondent reported no support.
- International Office: 6 respondents reported full support, with 1 respondent reporting limited support.

The majority of respondents (6 out of 7) indicated that they received full support from academic advisors during their mobility and subsequent recognition process. This suggests that academic advisors are generally effective in providing comprehensive assistance. However, one respondent reported receiving only partial support, indicating that there may be occasional inconsistencies in the level of guidance provided.

These results highlight the crucial role that academic advisors play in ensuring a smooth mobility and recognition process. The high level of full support suggests that most institutions have competent advisors who can adequately guide students. Nonetheless, the instance of partial support suggests a need for continuous training and standardization of practices among advisors to ensure all students receive the same level of support.
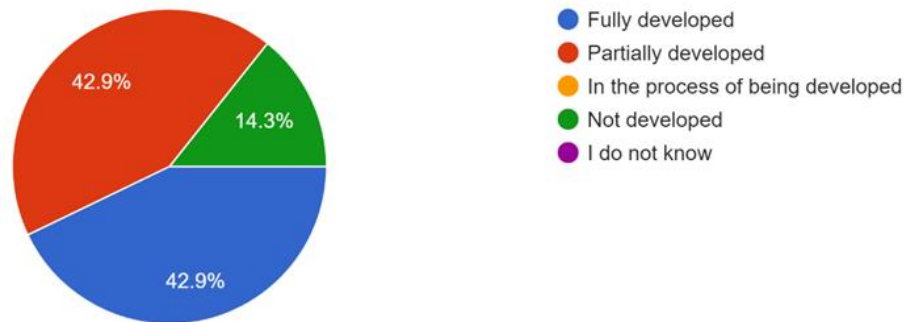


**Figure 9. Current state of guidelines or regulations for recognition procedures within an institution.**

Figure 9 illustrates the current state of guidelines or regulations for recognition procedures within an institution, based on the responses from seven participants.

● 42.9% of the respondents indicated that the institution has fully developed guidelines or regulations for recognition procedures.

● 42.9% of the respondents reported that the institution has partially developed guidelines or regulations.

● 14.3% reported that the institution's guidelines or regulations are still in the process of being developed.

● No respondents (0%) indicated that the guidelines or regulations are not developed at all.

● No respondents (0%) selected "I do not know" regarding the development status of these guidelines or regulations.

The data suggests a positive trend towards the establishment of formal recognition

procedures within the institution. A combined total of 85.8% of respondents acknowledged the presence of either fully or partially developed guidelines, which highlights a significant level of institutional commitment to structured recognition processes.

However, the fact that 42.9% reported only partially developed guidelines indicates that there is room for improvement and completion of these regulatory frameworks. The 14.3% of respondents indicating that guidelines are still in development also underscores ongoing efforts and the potential for future enhancement of these procedures.

The absence of responses indicating completely undeveloped guidelines or uncertainty about their status is promising. This suggests a level of awareness and progress that is already embedded within the institutional framework.

While there is a strong foundation for recognition procedures, continued efforts are necessary to fully realize and standardize these guidelines across the institution. This ongoing development process is critical to ensure that all aspects of recognition procedures are thoroughly covered and consistently applied.

Recognition procedures and documents, are agreed on in advance and used throughout the mobility and recognition process.
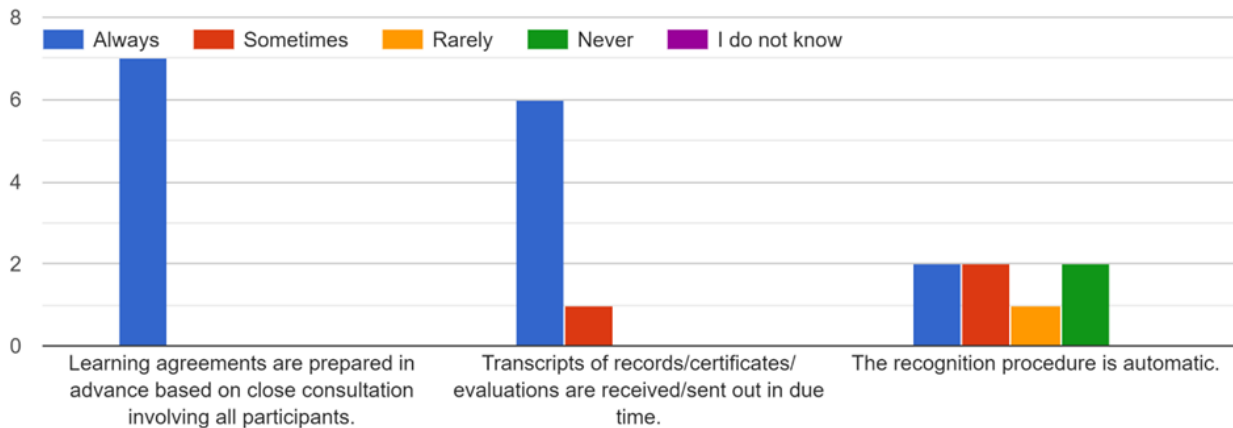


**Figure 10. The recognition procedures and documents are agreed upon in advance and utilized throughout the mobility and recognition process.**

Further on, the chart in Fig. 10 details whether the recognition procedures and documents are agreed upon in advance and utilized throughout the mobility and recognition process. It covers three specific aspects: preparation of learning agreements, handling of transcripts/records/certificates/evaluations, and the automatic nature of the recognition

procedure.

Regarding the section "Learning agreements are prepared in advance based on close consultation involving all participants", the results are as follows:
● Always – 7 respondents
● Sometimes - 0 respondent
● Rarely - 0 respondents
● Never - 0 respondents
● I do not know - 0 respondents

Regarding the section "Transcripts of records/certificates/evaluations are received/sent out in due time", the results are as follows:
● Always: 6 respondents
● Sometimes: 0 respondents
● Rarely: 0 respondent
● Never: 0 respondents
● I do not know: 1 respondent

As far as the section "The recognition procedure is automatic", the results are as follows:
● Always: 2 respondents
● Sometimes: 2 respondents
● Rarely: 1 respondent
● Never: 2 respondents
● I do not know: 0 respondent



Recognition committees or similar exist to recognise courses and credits after students complete their mobility.

7 responses

- Fully instated
- Partially instated
- In the process of being instated
- Not instated
- I do not know
- They are in place. That is, some departments have set up one recognition committee that takes char…
- The committees are ad hoc, set up once a request is brough for recognition

14.3%
14.3%
71.4%

**Figure 11. The existence and status of recognition committees responsible for recognizing courses and credits.**

The chart above (presented in Fig.11) illustrates the existence and status of recognition committees responsible for recognizing courses and credits after students complete their mobility programs.

- 71.4% of respondents stated that such committees are fully established.
- 14.3% of respondents indicated that such committees are partially established.
- 14.3% of respondents mentioned that these committees are already in place, with some departments having set up a single recognition committee responsible for this task.
- There were no responses indicating that the committees are "in the process of being instated".
- There were no responses indicating that the committees are "not instated".
-  There were no responses in the "I do not know" category
- There were no responses indicating that "the committees are ad hoc, set up once a request is brought for recognition"

The data from Figure 11 highlights a predominantly positive trend in the establishment of recognition committees across the institutions surveyed. The high percentage (71.4%) of respondents confirming the full establishment of these committees reflects a solid institutional commitment to facilitating the recognition of courses and credits after-mobility programs. This indicates that a majority of institutions have structured mechanisms in place to ensure that students' academic achievements during their mobility programs are adequately recognized, thereby supporting academic continuity and integrity.

The 14.3% of respondents who reported partial establishment suggest there are still institutions working towards full functionality of these committees. This could be indicative of ongoing administrative adjustments or the phased implementation of policies.

Interestingly, an additional 14.3% of respondents highlighted that some departments have already implemented single recognition committees, which might point to a decentralized approach within institutions where departments autonomously manage the recognition process. This could be effective in addressing specific departmental needs but may also require robust coordination to ensure consistency across the institution.

The absence of responses indicating that committees are either in the process of being instated, not instated, or functioning on an ad hoc basis, combined with no uncertainty among respondents, underscores a clear understanding and establishment of these committees within the surveyed institutions.

The findings suggest a mature stage in the institutionalization of recognition committees, with most institutions having well-established systems. Continued efforts should focus on supporting those still in partial stages and ensuring that departmental approaches align with overall institutional policies for consistent and fair recognition of students' academic efforts during mobility programs.

The recognition committees or similar rely on a full range of recognition decisions.
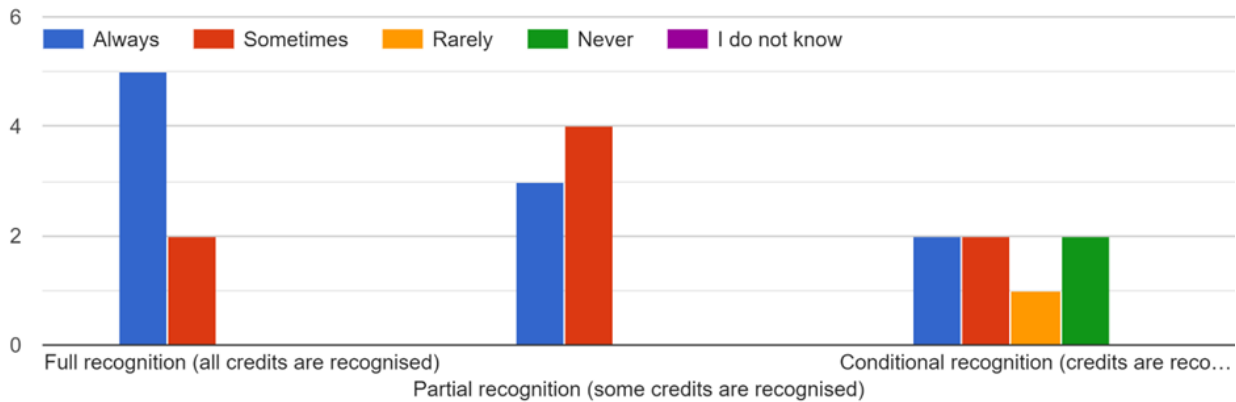
**Figure 12. The extent to which recognition committees rely on various types of recognition decisions.**

The bar chart showcases the extent to which recognition committees rely on various types of recognition decisions.

- 6 respondents stated that their institutions ALWAYS apply "full recognition"
- 2 respondents stated that their institutions SOMETIMES apply "full recognition"
- 3 respondents stated that their institutions ALWAYS apply "partial recognition"
- 4 respondents stated that their institutions SOMETIMES apply "partial recognition"
- 2 respondents stated that their institutions ALWAYS apply "conditional recognition"
- 2 respondents stated that their institutions SOMETIMES apply "conditional recognition"
- 1 respondent stated that his/her institution RARELY apply "conditional recognition"
- 2 respondents stated that their institutions NEVER apply "conditional recognition"

The data reveals that full recognition is the most consistently applied type of recognition decision among the surveyed institutions, with a significant majority employing it as a standard practice. This suggests a strong preference for clear-cut, unqualified recognition decisions when evaluating qualifications or credentials. In contrast, partial recognition, while also widely used, shows more variability in its application. This variability could stem from differing criteria or thresholds used by recognition committees when determining partial recognition, potentially reflecting nuanced assessments of qualifications. Conditional recognition appears to be the least standardized among the types surveyed. The responses indicate a spectrum of practices ranging from regular application to complete avoidance. This variability may reflect differing institutional
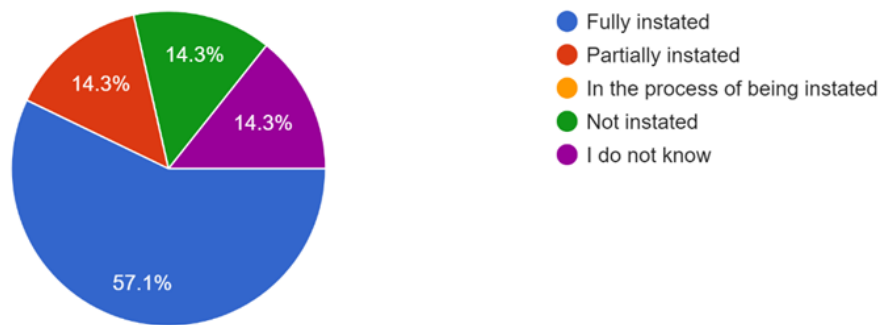
policies or the specific contexts in which conditional recognition is deemed appropriate.

The findings highlight the importance of understanding the specific contexts and criteria underpinning recognition decisions. Institutions may benefit from further clarification and alignment on when and how each type of recognition is applied, ensuring consistency and fairness in their evaluations. This structured approach not only summarizes the data effectively but also provides insights into the implications and considerations surrounding recognition decisions within educational or professional contexts.



A national recognition authority (following the Bologna Process Recognition/Lisbon Recognition Convention) exist with adequate procedures developed.
7 responses

- Fully instated
- Partially instated
- In the process of being instated
- Not instated
- I do not know

**Figure 13. The extent to which recognition committees rely on adequate recognition procedures.**

The chart demonstrates the extent to which recognition committees rely on adequate recognition procedures.

● 57.1% of the institutions responded that a national recognition authority with adequate procedures is "fully instated"
● 14.3% of the institutions responded that a national recognition authority with adequate procedures is "partially instated"
● 14.3 % of the institutions responded that a national recognition authority with adequate procedures is "not instated"
● 14.35 of the institutions responded that they "do not know" if there is a national recognition authority with adequate procedures.

The data illustrates varying levels of implementation and awareness regarding national

recognition authorities with adequate procedures among institutions. A significant majority, 57.1%, affirm the full establishment of such authorities, suggesting a substantial level of confidence in existing recognition frameworks. However, the presence of 14.3% each reporting partial implementation and non-existence indicates room for improvement or clarity in recognition procedures across different contexts. Furthermore, the 14.3% who are unsure about the existence or adequacy of these procedures highlight a potential gap in communication or understanding within the institutions surveyed. This uncertainty could stem from insufficient information dissemination or variability in how recognition procedures are perceived or accessed.

While a majority report robust recognition procedures in place, the significant minority being unsure or reporting partial implementation signals a need for clearer guidelines or improved communication regarding national recognition authorities. This would ensure consistent understanding and utilization of recognition procedures across all institutions surveyed.



The recognition is regulated at the level of the higher education institution to be completed within a certain period.

7 responses

- Within a month
- Within two months
- Within three months
- Longer
- I do not know

14.3%
14.3%
71.4%
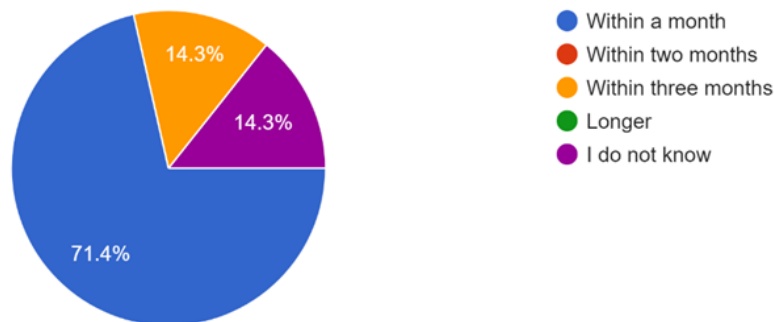
**Figure 14. The regulation of the recognition process at the level of higher education institutions.**

The graph illustrates whether the recognition process is regulated at the level of higher education institutions and if it must be completed within a specific timeframe:

● 71.4% of the respondents stated that the recognition period is regulated to be finished "within a month"

● 14.3% of the respondents stated that the recognition period is regulated to be finished "within two months"

● 14.3% of the respondents stated that they "do not know" recognition period

● None of the respondents (0%) specified a longer period of the recognition

The data reveals a strong regulatory framework concerning the recognition process at higher education institutions, predominantly requiring completion within relatively short timeframes. The majority (71.4%) adheres to a strict deadline of one month, suggesting a streamlined and efficient approach to handling recognition. A smaller segment (14.3%) extends this timeframe to two months, indicating some variability in regulatory standards among institutions or regions. Notably, a portion of respondents (14.3%) expressed uncertainty about the specific regulatory requirements, highlighting a potential need for clearer communication or dissemination of guidelines within the sector. These findings underscore the importance of standardized procedures and clear regulatory frameworks in the recognition of qualifications within higher education. Efficient recognition processes are crucial for facilitating student mobility and ensuring transparency and fairness across institutions and regions. Future efforts could focus on enhancing awareness and understanding of these regulatory requirements to further streamline administrative procedures and support international cooperation in education.

Formal learning experiences (i.e. courses offered as part of a study programme/programmes) entered into the learning agreement (before and/or ...d as part of the mobility in diploma supplements.
7 responses
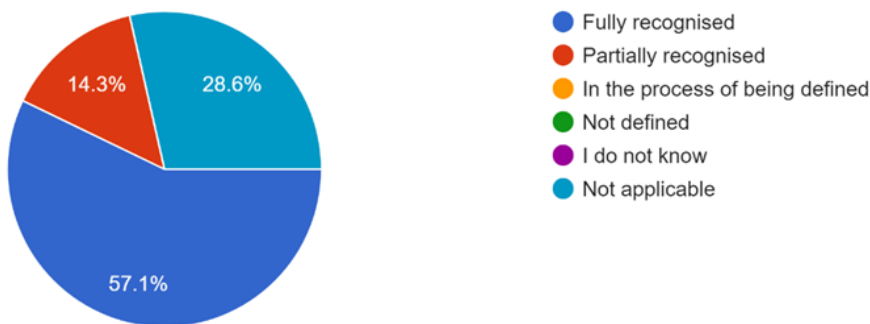


**Figure 15. The inclusion of formal learning experiences into the learning agreement.**

Fig. 15 illustrates whether formal learning experiences, like offered courses, are included in the learning agreement.

● 57.1% of the institutions surveyed indicated they are "fully recognized,"
● 14.3% reported "partial recognition."
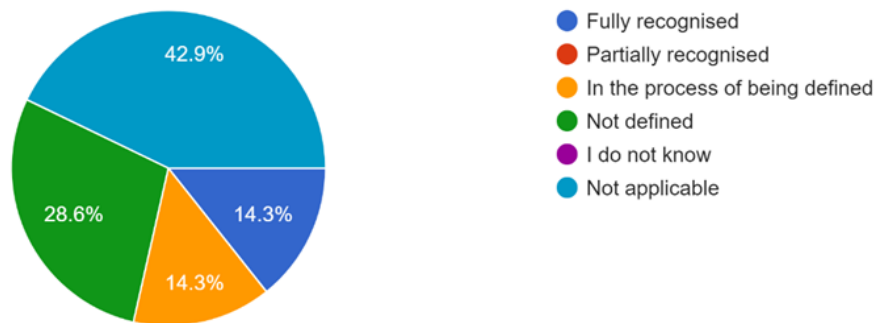● 28.6% of institutions responded "not applicable."

● 0% of the respondents selected "not defined" or "I do not know."

The data from the survey indicates varied practices among institutions regarding the inclusion of formal learning experiences in learning agreements. A majority of institutions (57.1%) fully recognize such experiences, which suggests a commitment to acknowledging structured educational activities within formal agreements. However, a significant proportion (28.6%) indicated that this aspect is not applicable, which could imply differences in educational structures or priorities across surveyed institutions.

The findings highlight a need for standardization or clearer guidelines regarding the incorporation of formal learning experiences into learning agreements across educational institutions. While a majority recognize these experiences fully, the existence of a substantial "not applicable" category indicates potential complexities or variations in institutional policies or educational frameworks. Addressing these differences could enhance transparency and consistency in how formal learning is integrated into academic agreements, potentially benefiting students and educational stakeholders alike.



**Figure 16. The recognition of non-formal learning experiences into the diploma supplement.**

Fig. 16 demonstrates if the non-formal learning experiences like volunteering, language courses etc. are recognized as part of the mobility.

● 42% of the institutions responded that they "fully recognize" the integration of such courses.

● 14.3% of the institutions responded that they "are in the process of defining" the integration of such courses.

● 14.3% of the institutions responded that such a practice is "not applicable"

The findings from Fig. 16 highlight varying degrees of acceptance and readiness among institutions regarding the recognition of non-formal learning experiences. The majority of institutions (42%) actively embrace these experiences, reflecting a progressive attitude towards acknowledging diverse forms of learning beyond traditional academic settings. This recognition is crucial as it validates the skills and competencies gained through activities like volunteering or language courses, enhancing the comprehensive educational profile of students.

However, the fact that 14.3% of institutions are still in the process of defining integration suggests a need for clearer guidelines or frameworks to standardize the inclusion of non-formal learning in diploma supplements across educational institutions. This ongoing development indicates a positive trend towards inclusivity but also underscores the complexities involved in assessing and accrediting non-traditional learning pathways.

Meanwhile, the 14.3% of institutions that consider such practices not applicable reveal potential challenges or reservations within certain educational contexts. Understanding these perspectives is essential for addressing barriers to recognition and for fostering broader acceptance of non-formal learning as an integral part of educational outcomes.

While progress is evident in recognizing non-formal learning experiences, there is still room for further refinement and standardization across educational institutions to ensure equitable recognition and integration into diploma supplements worldwide.

Students receive feedback on their learning during mobility (e.g. from guidance officers, teachers, staff at international offices).
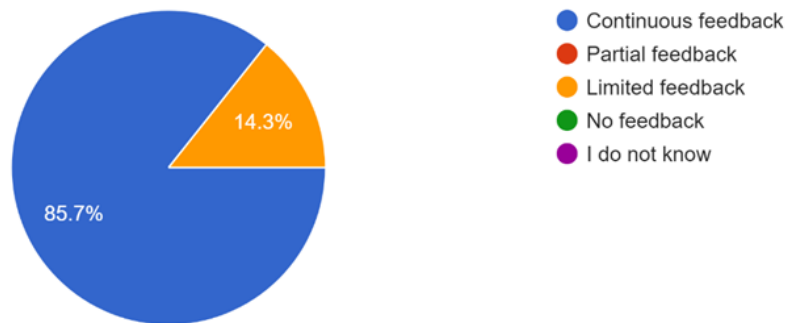
7 responses



**Figure 17. Provision of feedback on the learning agreement during mobility.**

Fig. 24 demonstrates whether students received feedback on their learning from guidance officers or teachers at international offices during their mobility.
- 85.7% of the respondents reported that they received "continuous feedback"

- 14.3% of the respondents reported that they received "limited feedback"

The majority of students, comprising 85.7%, indicated that they received continuous feedback on their learning from guidance officers or teachers during their international mobility. This suggests a proactive approach by educational institutions in providing ongoing support and assessment to students while they are abroad.

The high percentage of students receiving continuous feedback is encouraging as it indicates a structured approach to supporting students' learning experiences during mobility programs. Continuous feedback can play a crucial role in enhancing learning outcomes, helping students stay on track with their academic goals, and addressing any challenges they may face in a timely manner. The data underscores the importance of institutional support mechanisms in facilitating a positive and productive international mobility experience for students.

All documentation is properly stored within a dedicated system or platform (institutional system, cloud storage services, paper copies and archives, etc.).

7 responses



- Electronic form
- Paper form
- Both electronic and paper
- Neither
- I do not know
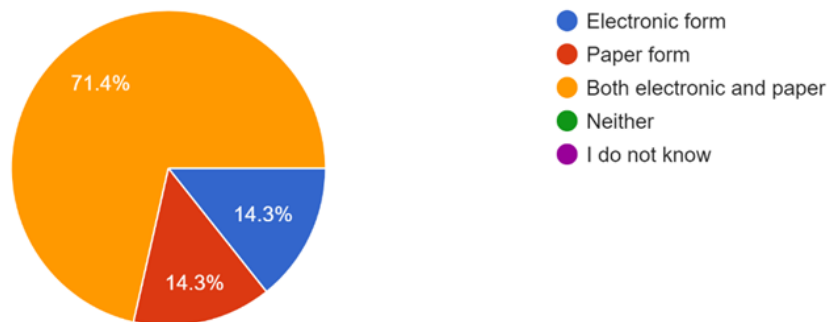
**Figure 18. Storing documentation properly within a dedicated system or platform.**

Fig. 18 depicts whether all documentation is properly stored within a dedicated system or platform.

- 71.4% of the respondents reported storing all the documentation "both electronically and in paper"
- 14.3% of the respondents reported storing all the documentation in "paper form"
- 14.3% of the respondents reported storing all the documentation in "electronic form"

The data from Fig. 18 highlights a diversified approach to documentation storage among respondents. While a significant portion favors a hybrid model (both electronic and paper), there are clear preferences for purely paper-based or electronic storage solutions as well. This diversity

underscores the importance of flexibility in document management practices to accommodate varying organizational needs, regulatory requirements, and technological preferences. Organizations should consider these findings when designing or optimizing their documentation storage systems to ensure they meet the diverse needs and preferences of their stakeholders effectively.

Follow-up questionnaires/surveys on the learning achieved during mobility are completed by:
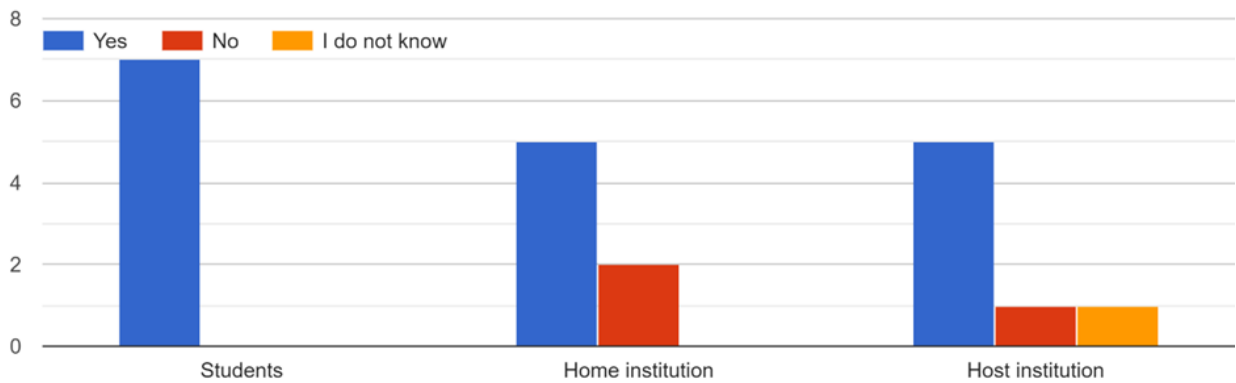


**Figure 19. Follow-up questionnaire/surveys on the learning achieved during the mobility.**

Fig. 19 refers to the parties who complete the follow-up questionnaire/surveys on the learning achieved during the mobility.

● 7 respondents reported that the follow-up questionnaire is completed by the "students"

● 5 respondents reported that the follow-up questionnaire is completed by the "home institution"

● 5 respondents reported that the follow-up questionnaire is completed by the "host institution"

● 1 respondent reported lack of knowledge in this

The distribution of responses indicates a tripartite involvement in the follow-up survey process, with students, home institutions, and host institutions all playing significant roles. The balance among these parties suggests a collaborative approach to evaluating the learning outcomes of mobility programs.

Students provide direct and personal feedback, which is essential for understanding individual experiences and learning gains. Home institutions are responsible for integrating mobility experiences with their academic frameworks and support services. Host institutions offer an

external perspective on student performance and adaptability.

The involvement of multiple parties in the follow-up process ensures a comprehensive assessment of the learning achieved during mobility. However, the one response indicating a lack of knowledge underscores the need for clearer communication and standardized procedures across institutions.

## 5. Conclusions

Reflecting on the findings of the MORIN project survey, it becomes evident that significant strides have been made towards improving mobility recognition practices among higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Western Balkans (WB6) that from the Consortium. The survey highlights a generally positive trend in the acknowledgment and integration of both formal and non-formal learning experiences into learning agreements and diploma supplements.

The primary purpose of the survey was to evaluate current practices, identify gaps, and provide actionable insights to enhance the recognition of mobility among participating institutions. The findings suggest that a majority of HEIs have established robust frameworks for recognizing student mobility, though certain areas still require attention.

A notable finding is that 71.4% of the respondents indicated that their institutions have regulated the recognition period to be completed within a month. This demonstrates a commitment to timely recognition processes, which is crucial for maintaining the momentum of academic progress for mobile students. Furthermore, 85.7% of respondents reported receiving continuous feedback on their learning agreements during mobility, underscoring the importance of ongoing support and guidance for students.

However, the data also reveal areas for improvement. For instance, only 42% of the institutions fully recognize the integration of non-formal learning experiences, such as volunteering or language courses, into diploma supplements. This indicates a need for more inclusive recognition policies that value diverse learning experiences.

The MORIN project's findings underscore the critical role of consistent and transparent recognition practices in fostering regional integration and alignment with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) standards. By enhancing the portability of skills and supporting mutual recognition of qualifications, these practices can significantly contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of higher education in the region.

In conclusion, while the survey results reflect a positive trajectory in mobility recognition practices among WB6 HEIs, part of the MORIN Consortium, ongoing efforts are essential to address the identified gaps. The insights gathered through this survey will inform future strategies aimed at improving the recognition process, ensuring that the learning outcomes acquired abroad are properly acknowledged and valued within the participating institutions. This alignment is not only vital for promoting a culture of mobility but also for enhancing regional collaboration and integration.

## 6. Recommendations

(provide actionable recommendations for immediate and long-term strategies for improvement)

### *Immediate Strategies*

1. **Standardize Recognition Periods**: Establish clear guidelines across all institutions to ensure recognition periods are uniformly regulated and transparent.
2. **Enhance Recognition of Non-Formal Learning**: Develop policies and frameworks to fully integrate non-formal learning experiences into diploma supplements, promoting a holistic approach to student mobility.
3. **Improve Feedback Mechanisms**: Ensure continuous and structured feedback is a mandatory part of the mobility program, involving both home and host institutions.
4. **Digitize Documentation**: Shift towards fully electronic documentation systems to enhance accessibility and reduce reliance on paper forms, streamlining administrative processes.

### *Long-Term Strategies*

1. **Harmonize Mobility Practices with EHEA Standards**: Align mobility recognition practices with European Higher Education Area (EHEA) standards to promote regional integration and mutual recognition of qualifications.
2. **Capacity Building and Training**: Invest in training programs for staff to handle mobility recognition processes efficiently and consistently, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.
3. **Strengthen Regional Collaboration**: Encourage collaboration among WB6 HEIs to share best practices and develop joint initiatives that enhance the mobility recognition framework.
4. **Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation**: Implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of mobility recognition practices and identify areas for improvement.

By implementing these recommendations, HEIs in the Western Balkans can significantly enhance their mobility recognition processes, fostering greater regional integration and ensuring the academic success of their students.